

REMARKS

Claims 12-21, 35-37 and 82-105 are currently pending. No claims are added, amended or canceled by this response.

Claims 19-21, 37 and 82-105 have been rejected and claims 12-18 and 35-36 have been allowed. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present Application in view of the following remarks and accompanying declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131.

The Office Action rejects claims 19-21, 37 and 82-105 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,187,027 to Mariant in view of 5,197,978 to Hess and 5,330,483 to Heaven. Applicants respectfully submit that they reduced to practice the subject matter of the rejected claims prior to the effective date of the Mariant reference (April 28, 1995). Applicants also submit herewith a declaration of the inventors under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 that demonstrates conception prior to the effective date of the Mariant reference and diligence from April 28, 1995 until constructive reduction to practice on June 7, 1995. As such, the Mariant reference is removed as prior art and claims 19-21, 37 and 82-105 are believed to be allowable.

In addition, the Office Action's rejection of claims 82 and 83 is improper as these claims depend from allowed claim 15.

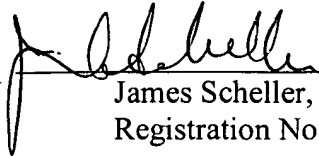
In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance but for the Suggestion of Interference and respectfully request that an Interference be declared with dispatch.

If any issues remain that may be resolved through a telephone interview, Applicants request that the Examiner contact Applicants' counsel at the number noted below.

Please charge any necessary fee or credit any overpayment in connection with this application to Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 3/13/2007

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